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Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's

Reports on equal pay for equal work and first...

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THE LABOUR PARTY

REPORTS
ON
EQUAL PAY
FOR
EQUAL WORK
AND
FIRST STEPS
TOWARDS A
DOMESTIC WORKERS' CHARTER

To be presented by the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations to the

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LABOUR WOMEN, LONDON, June 3, 4, and 5, 1930

Price 1*d.* *Post Free* 1½ 1*s. per dozen*

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Equal Pay for Equal Work

Report to be presented at the National Conference of Labour Women, 1930

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

1.—The principle that a man and a woman doing the same work should receive the same pay has always been accepted by the Labour Movement. It makes a strong appeal to the sense of justice, and its denial must always create a feeling of bitterness. In the following statement we take as an accepted principle that men and women doing similar work should receive a similar reward in the way of wages. But having accepted that principle it is necessary in order that we may work effectively for a just solution of this problem that we should consider carefully the present position in industry and the professions and the history of this demand as well as that of rates of wages. We must also consider the principles upon which wages are now decided, and the various important elements in decisions affecting them. In the following report, we have tried to give a bird's-eye view of the past and present in relation to these subjects so as to lead us to a right conclusion.

FIRST KNOWN PROTEST AGAINST UNDERCUTTING

2.—As early as 1811 the Society of Journeymen Tailors, one of the very first Trade Unions, came into conflict with the Company of Master Tailors over the problem of family work. According to the Masters, the Society had made rules which "precluded the wife and children from earning one shilling in the way in which the husband and father can best instruct them." The Union put forward the plea that women were being "unfairly driven from their proper sphere in the social scale, unfeelingly torn from the maternal duties of a parent and unjustly encouraged to compete with men *in ruining the money value of labour.*"

FIRST T.U.C. RESOLUTION

3.—At that time no question had arisen as to equality between men and women, and the Masters had a strong leaning towards family labour as a means of cheapening

production. It was not until 1882 that the principle of Equal Pay for Equal Work was definitely and unanimously adopted by a Trades Union Congress. Miss Clementina Black moved and the Congress carried a resolution "that where women do the same work as men they shall receive equal pay." It closed a long series of rather bitter discussions as to whether women should be allowed to work at all at the same processes as men. Whatever the arguments used in discussing this question, the fear of cheap labour was the principal cause of opposition to the women and Miss Black's resolution was accepted with the object of protecting the men's rate against lower paid competitors.

In 1886 a somewhat similar resolution was adopted in the printing trades. The resolution remained a dead letter in practice so far as compositors and similar grades were concerned because of the lack of women to whom it could be applied. Indeed, the tendency was not to employ women at all if they could not be got to work for less than men.

THE COTTON TEXTILE WORKERS

4.—Throughout the whole of the period and right up to the time of the war the question of applying the principle was seldom raised because women were so seldom occupied on the same tasks as men. But in the cotton textile trade and to a lesser degree in the woollen textiles women were employed at some of the jobs. In regard to the cotton textiles weavers from the beginning of factory industry received the same rates whether they were men or women. This was due mainly to two things. In the first place, the work had developed from a family industry carried on in each home to that of a family group working at a loom in a mill, to the final stage of the individual worker of to-day. But the rates paid were, and continued to be, piece rates. In the early days it would have been impossible to say what part of the work had been done by father, mother, sons or daughters—and as the father took the whole wage, it was not an important question! The position of women was very different then from that of to-day, and it must be remembered that the law which gave

married women a right to hold property was not passed until 1882.

Secondly, as factory organisation increased, Trade Union development was sufficiently strong to insist that there should be no differentiation between men and women which would have *led to a lowering of the wage*. Weaving is still piece-work. There is still no differentiation of rate between men and women, though actually the earnings of women average a little less. This is partly because in certain sections of the trade the women pay men for work in connection with the machinery of their looms, and partly because a man sometimes takes charge of more looms than women do. It may be noted that women never become over-lookers.

Weaving in the woollen trade has followed a somewhat different course, for while the piece rates remain the same for both men and women, the women receive 10 per cent. less. It is said to be due to the fact that they cannot be employed at night. It is more likely because Trade Union organisation is not so strong as amongst cotton workers. They gain in slack time, because workers on night-shifts are put off before those on day-shifts.

THE POSITION OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

5.—In turning to the history of the rates for professional women, the position is the same. In clerical trades before the war, women very rarely received the same rates or did exactly the same work as men save where individual proficiency and ability were specially important. In certain well-organised professions, such as the medical, a very strong line was taken by those already in the profession to prevent women being paid at lower rates. Nominally the rates for women doctors were and are the same, though it may be pointed out that while the nominal rate is the same, the less attractive posts in public health and similar work carrying the lower salaries appear more often to be filled by women. In teaching before the war the difference between men's and women's salaries was greater than now, and the number of women in proportion to men was increasing. There was a very definite tension in the profession because of the severe competition of those receiving lower salaries.

WOMEN'S RATES ON WOMEN'S WORK

6.—Side by side with the history of women's rates on men's jobs, some notice must be taken of the history of women's rates on jobs in which they have not been in competition with men. A great part of factory industry had developed as the special province of women workers. This tendency has grown, and the increase in the number of women employed in many such industries, comparing 1923 with 1929, is especially remarkable, since the number of men employed has fallen. (See table.) The numbers in the clerical and other professions has also increased rapidly, especially since the war.

The following figures show the estimated numbers of insured persons employed in certain groups of trades where women are largely employed :—

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INSURED PERSONS

Trade	1923		1929		Increase or decrease	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Engineering ..	756,930	52,900	689,790	68,080	— 67,140	+ 15,180
Metal trades ..	358,730	145,780	356,460	171,620	— 2,270	+ 25,840
Textiles.. ..	532,050	798,550	508,330	807,090	— 23,720	+ 8,540
Clothing ..	111,080	326,640	111,820	334,200	+ 740	+ 7,560
Boots and shoes	93,620	50,230	83,850	51,400	— 9,770	+ 1,170
Food, &c. ..	301,320	204,110	295,670	216,770	— 5,650	+ 12,660
Rubber	33,140	24,760	38,980	26,330	+ 5,840	+ 1,570
Oilcloth, &c. ..	10,440	1,880	11,590	2,190	+ 1,150	+ 310
Brush and broom	4,930	4,060	5,620	4,540	+ 690	+ 480
Scientific instruments ..	11,270	6,520	16,700	9,650	+ 5,430	+ 3,130
Musical instruments ..	16,430	3,330	21,420	6,970	+ 4,990	+ 3,640
Toys and games	6,580	5,640	6,330	6,230	— 250	+ 590
Entertainments .	38,740	20,550	47,780	26,180	+ 9,040	+ 5,630
Hotels, &c. ..	93,220	161,520	121,010	212,690	+ 27,790	+ 51,170
Laundries, &c.. .	20,290	86,990	27,860	107,170	+ 7,570	+ 20,180
Printing & paper	216,510	136,280	236,080	150,700	+ 19,570	+ 14,420

This increase in the employment of women is also borne out by the estimated total numbers of insured persons at December, 1929. Whereas the number of men employed has only increased 228,000 on over eight million employed in 1923, the number of women has increased by 362,000 on just under three million in 1923.

In industry and the professions it is broadly true that women working on women's jobs, where they do not come into competition with men, have been paid a substantially lower rate than where they do compete with men for similar jobs.

The striking example is that of textile workers where men and women cotton weavers get exactly the same rates, and woollen weavers have only a slight variation. In artificial silk, however, where women only are engaged in weaving, the rates are scarcely comparable with cotton workers.

A still more notable example of this same thing is to be found in the nursing profession. In only one branch of this profession are men and women both employed, viz., mental nursing. Here the rate for women is very much higher than the rate for sick nursing where men are practically unknown. Trade union organisation is strong amongst mental nurses, but is weak amongst others.

The fact is that women have always received higher rates in those employments in which men are predominantly employed, **because organised male workers have insisted as a condition of women's continuance in or admission to such employment that they shall be paid a rate approximately equal to themselves.**

THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON WOMEN'S RATES

7.—The war affected women workers in very important respects. It enormously increased the demand for them as workers, and as the military demands on the men of the community increased it became necessary that women should take the place of men in essential occupations of many kinds.

As munition work became more and more urgent an attempt was first made to substitute women for men at women's rates, **and it was only by vigorous trade union action** that the movement was stopped. At the same time the demand for women workers in occupations normally carried on by them or similar to such occupations was so great that it had a very large effect upon their scale of wages. In munition work, which covered a very wide field and also affected the rates in every other employment, the

minimum time rate of 20s. was fixed for women on women's work very early in 1915. For many women this meant an increase in wages of 8s. to 10s. a week, and the rate was continually increased during the period of the war with the upward movement of prices and the increasing demand for women workers. In 1918 the minimum time rate was £2 3s. 6d. for a forty-seven-hour week.

On the other hand, where women were doing men's work their time rate was fixed as four-fifths that of a man, while their piece rates were the same. It must, however, be borne in mind that even at the highest point **the wages paid to a woman for a skilled job such as might normally be done by a woman were very much lower than the wages paid to a woman doing a skilled job normally done by a man,** but there was often very little difference between the two jobs.

This difference was due to the fact that the men's unions insisted on the maintenance of the men's rate whether the work was done by men or women, while the employers equally insisted on maintaining the women's rates for women's work. The history of industrial arbitrations of the period shows over and over again the struggle of the trade unions to prove that the work being done by the women was really men's work, but that it had been altered in some way so as to bring it under the lower rates paid for women's jobs.

In many occupations outside the scope of the Munition Acts, the effect on wages was the same, and in certain instances trade unions secured equal time rates as well.

These facts should be remembered because they show how little difference there often is between what are by custom men's jobs and what are women's. With the end of the war there came the closing down of munition making on a large scale, and the return of the men from the armed forces. Though the substitution of men for women on such jobs as were open was immediate, the effect of these crowded years was not lost. The higher rates of women's wages which had prevailed affected the rates fixed for women since then. With the trade slump and unemployment which began at the end of 1920, wage rates fell, but the trade unions, through the Trade Boards Act of 1918, saved women workers from the worst effects.

THE WAR AND THE PROFESSIONS

8.—The position in the professions is similar to that in industry. Large numbers of women did work normally done by men and proved their capacity in spite of lack of previous training. This strengthened their own belief that there was no sufficient reason for women being paid lower rates, and in many instances their demand for equal pay was successful. In industry, commerce, and the professions the difference in rates for men and women has been definitely less over the whole range of employment since the war, and where men and women are in competition with one another—*i.e.*, are doing the same work—it is generally true that the woman gets four-fifths of the man's wages. It is on this basis that the Burnham scale of salaries for teachers was drawn up.

The very important fact must be noted that the Burnham scale applies to teachers under public authorities, not those in private schools. In the latter, the women are normally paid far less than men. This again suggests that it is only when strong organisation is behind the employee and the employers that equality or near equality is reached.

Similar conditions are to be noted in the Civil Service, where the workers are well organised by comparison with private clerical employment.

A very rough estimate in the Civil Service would also give much the same proportion in its later stages after the so-called marriage age (see below) of twenty-six is passed. In the mixed grades, however, the minimum rate at starting for men and women is the same. In the work of stage and film artists, the latter a profession which has developed rapidly since the war, the difference between men's and women's salaries is less. The " stars " are paid on individual talent and power to draw. A woman may get more than any man. In the lower ranks, the " crowds " in films are usually paid a uniform rate of £1 1s. a day.

WOMEN'S RATES IN INDUSTRY

9.—The problem of professional work is to-day very different in many ways from that of women in industry. In industry the carrying out of the principle of equal pay for equal work—if that means the same job—would not accomplish much outside a very few industries, of which

weaving is the most important example. For the fact is that the millions of women in machine industry of all sorts and kinds are almost entirely occupied in processes on which no men are employed. If we are to see any substantial approximation of women's wages to men's, we must work for equality over the vast range of similar jobs undertaken by both. As industrial processes become more and more the minding of machines or some form of repetition work, women take over production formerly carried out by highly skilled male workers. Sometimes men and women take over machines which have little difference between them, and yet women only are employed on one type, men only on another. The women, however, get a much lower rate than the men. If we put aside certain heavy industries and dangerous processes, the difference between men's and women's work gets rapidly less, but the difference between their rates of payment remains.

For instance, in trades like sugar confectionery, cocoa and chocolate, soap and candles, tobacco, the agreed time rate on which piece rates are fixed are respectively 51s. 6d., 53s., 56s., and 74s. for men, and 29s., 28s., 30s., and 44s. 6d. for women.

In trades covered by Trade Boards the average rate for men is 48s. 10d. and for women 27s. 8d. In the following trades where men and women are actually doing the same work the rates are the same: boot and shoe repairing, brush and broom, piece-workers in the fur trade and sugar confectionery.

BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

10.—Employers of all kinds are anxious to maintain the plea that women ought to be paid less than men, and put forward the two following reasons:—

(a) Women normally leave their work on marriage and are in industry for a shorter period than men. The employer therefore claims that a girl is not worth training, and that the less difficult jobs must be kept for her.

We must, however, point out that long training in industry is practically a dead letter and that there are few processes which the worker cannot quickly learn.

(b) Men have greater physical strength than women.

This, of course, has validity in certain heavy trades, but it does not touch at all the very large field of machine industry where muscular strength is not required.

There are, however, two other special problems to which we must draw attention. The one is the fact that a man is regarded as having family responsibilities and a woman is not. This, of course, is not true in all cases, but so long as it is normally the fact that a man must provide for his children, so long will there be a tendency to give men more money than women—to pay, in short, what is regarded as a married man's wage to all men, a single woman's wage to all women.

In the opinion of many people this difficulty can best be dealt with by the establishment of a universal system of family allowances, but no definite conclusion has been reached on this policy by the Labour Movement.

The second and most important point is that of the lack amongst women of trade union organisation. At present a far smaller proportion of women are organised than of men, and where rates of pay for women are equal to men's, it is normally due to the action of trade unions, the bulk of whose members are men.

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE PROFESSIONS

11.—Parliament has definitely accepted the principle of equal pay for the same work in the Civil Service, but it has not yet carried it out. Here one of the greatest difficulties is the requirement that women shall leave the Service on marriage. The heads of the administration of the Service make this regulation the grounds for their claim that they cannot pay the same rates to the women who remain, nor give them the same opportunities of promotion so long as they lose the large majority of their women employees by the time they are twenty-six.

With regard to the teachers the tendency to-day is for an ever-increasing number of women to come into the profession. As it is still the view of local education authorities and the public generally that men *must* be employed to teach older boys a certain number of men must be required in the profession. Whether the minimum of men has yet been reached is not clear. At the present time the educational standard of women teachers is on the

whole higher than that of the men, and this is especially so amongst new recruits. The difference between men's and women's wages is much less than it was as a result of pressure from the teachers' organisations. If the tendency of women to take the place of men continues and reaches the point it has in U.S.A., where practically all the teachers in the public schools are women, the male teacher will find his best weapon against it in the demand for complete equality between men's and women's rates.

Throughout the clerical profession and in commerce women are playing a larger part, but it is noticeable that their work is usually different from that of men, and their rates remain different, too. In private offices the secretarial work tends to become more and more the province of women.

MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

12.—Some bold attempts have been made to remedy the inequality by paying the same rates to men and women on similar jobs. The Woolwich Borough Council, for example, paid the same rate to men and women supervising in the swimming baths who had exactly the same qualifications and duties. Their expenditure was disallowed by the Government Auditor in 1928 on the ground that the amount paid exceeded the market rate for such employment. This is a difficulty which local authorities may always meet and the present law gives an auditor such power that the decision may be simply the autocratic act of this one official. The question of the market rate for women's work has a very great importance, and an authority is likely always to have to face opposition from ratepayers by paying above it, whether to men or women. Yet public authorities ought to be model employers and set the pace for others.

MODERN TENDENCIES

13.—With the extension of the franchise to women of twenty-one, women workers are able to exercise far greater powers and are beginning to realise that they may well exercise them in the direction of improving their economic condition.

Changes in population and social custom result in a larger number of women remaining unmarried, and a still

larger number who, when they do marry, have small families which require less constant attention.

Many such women, desiring to secure a higher standard of life, return to industry, and single women may remain in it all their lives. More women are therefore available for employment for a longer period of their lives.

These are modern tendencies which have developed with great rapidity in the last century. From the time at the commencement of the industrial revolution when it was taken for granted that a woman was worth so much less than a man and when her wages were themselves the property of a man and not her own, up to the present day when she is an independent worker with power to organise as a trade unionist and as a voter, seems more than a hundred years of history when we compare it with the previous centuries of women's story.

We may be satisfied that in the past our advance has been a great one, that its rate has quickened, and that it is our business now to maintain and increase that progress.

HOW TO WORK TOWARDS EQUAL REMUNERATION

14.—We can work most effectively if we pursue the following methods which lead in the direction of equality and freedom for women.

I. **Trade union organisation and organisation on similar lines for the professions.**—We need not emphasise this further. It stands out as the basis of all effective work in equalising wage rates for men and women whether on the same jobs or on different processes.

II. **Securing model conditions of equality in Municipal and State employment.**

III. **Continued development of Trade Boards in all sweated and low-paid industries, thus establishing minimum wages for low-paid workers and helping in raising the standard of women's wages.**

IV. **Securing abolition of all regulations requiring dismissal of women on marriage whether Teachers, Civil or Municipal employees, or in other employments.**

We ask the Conference to adopt this Report and these proposals and to give all possible assistance in helping to establish the practice of Equal Pay for Men and Women.

First Steps towards a Domestic Workers' Charter

DOMESTIC work employs more women than any other occupation. It is the least organised of all trades both as to employers and employed. It is the least regulated by law. It is a form of personal service which at one end of the social scale is largely a matter of unnecessary luxury and at the other is very badly needed and yet wholly inadequate because of lack of money to pay for it.

The well-to-do under-employed make to-day a large demand for elaborate service, while the housewife of the worker, employed or unemployed, is overworked and unable to secure the service she requires for the well-being of her family and herself. Between the two ends of the scale there is to be found every degree of need and variety of conditions. In short, household work which is so important to the community is carried out in such a disorganised fashion as to give satisfaction to no one. The "mistress" (a term which democracy no longer uses for employers in any other trade) complains and discusses interminably the "servant problem"; the young woman worker in general prefers to enter any other employment; demand is often said to be greater than supply; and a majority of women, the wives of working men, who need help in their homes, cannot get it.

It is because of these conditions that we are putting forward this report at this Conference. We desire to open the subject by this preliminary discussion. We seek especially the co-operation of domestic servants in planning a Charter for Domestic Workers which would lead a way to a happy solution of these problems and difficulties. Domestic workers must express their own views on their trade, and then by discussion with other workers they can develop a definite policy.

Number of Indoor Domestic Servants

The number of women and girls over 12 who earned their living as indoor domestic workers in England and Wales at the Census of 1921 was 1,148,698. Of these, 795,819 were over the age of 20, and formed no less than 217 out of every

thousand women employed. It is by far the largest occupation for women, as the following figures show :—

Occupation	Census 1921 Number of employed women over 20 years of age.
Indoor Domestic Service	795,819
Textile Workers	414,050
*Clothing Workers	389,492
Clerks and Typists	272,563
Shop Assistants	222,115

* This figure includes some thousands of small employers and workers on their own account.

To estimate the real extent of the industry many thousands of daily domestic workers must be added. These were not separately enumerated in the 1921 census, but charwomen and office cleaners together numbered no less than 118,476. It is impossible to give figures as to present day numbers, but it is reasonable to suppose that they have now been greatly increased, though whether at the expense of the number in resident domestic work is doubtful.

Political Importance of Domestic Workers

With the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men, women employed in domestic service have votes and, therefore, a great opportunity. For the first time they are able, if they choose, to make their wants known and to achieve their demands by the organisation of their political power.

When the figures for certain constituencies are examined the extent of that potential power can be gauged. Strictly comparable figures are difficult to obtain, but even comparing 1921 census figures with 1929 electoral figures quite sound indications can be given. The following boroughs with a large number of domestic workers give remarkable results :—

Borough	1921 Census, Resident Domestic Workers over 20.	1929 Women Electors over 21.
Kensington	23,091	81,926
Westminster	20,511	59,059
Hampstead	10,926	39,781
Chelsea	8,175	25,738

The number of domestic workers is, therefore, large

enough to dominate political issues. If they acted in an organised manner they could turn the scale in their own favour and make these constituencies as representative of domestic workers' interests as a Durham County constituency, *e.g.*, is representative of miners and their wives or a Lancashire town of the textile workers.

Reasons for the Problem

Why is there a problem? The answer is that there is a large demand for domestic workers, but the demand is from time to time unsatisfied owing to the causes with which we shall deal. In general, the more servants procurable, the better the well-to-do are pleased, while some domestic help is necessary for comfort wherever the standard of life is high. Employers in industry in general try to obtain workers for low wages and long hours. Mistresses in general try to get as much service as possible for as little payment as possible. The fact that servants work alone or in small groups has made them difficult to organise, every attempt so far has failed, and they are, therefore, powerless against exploitation.

Similarly the employers are scattered and unorganised. There is no standardisation in the occupation. It bears all the marks of an unorganised industry, where sweating and long hours are only prevented when the demand is very definitely more than the supply, and the crude laws of competition operate in favour of the worker. At the same time, every improvement in the workers' condition in other forms of employment reflects on domestic service and raises its status by drawing women workers into those employments and leaving fewer recruits for domestic service.

Servants in other Countries

The problem is not peculiar to this country. There have even been various attempts in other lands to deal by legislation with hours and conditions. We are unable to say whether these have been successful as reports on this subject are not available. There does not appear to have been any attempt to fix rates of wages. Perhaps the most far-reaching legislative proposal is the one now under discussion in Germany, under which rest, sleeping rooms,

holidays, &c., are to be regulated. It is interesting to note that in Germany it is estimated that the numbers in domestic service have fallen from 40 per cent. of all occupied persons in 1882 to about 12 per cent. at the present time, a result due to middle-class poverty and increasing industrialisation. Health Insurance laws and provision for old age seem generally to apply to domestic workers, and in Germany they are covered by the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. In Russia, a law to regulate the work of domestic servants is now being discussed.

Government Inquiries in Great Britain

Though not the subject of special legislation in our own country, there have been at least four Government inquiries into the conditions of the profession. As early as 1899 a report was presented to the Board of Trade on "The Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants."

In 1919, arising out of the demand for servants at the end of the war and the general unpopularity of the trade at this period when women had been greatly needed for munition works of all sorts, together with the expected unemployment to which they would be subjected, a Committee of Inquiry was set up. The report is especially remarkable because it shows so clearly the lack of any general solution. Although a large and representative committee, no agreed report was possible; in each of the four sub-commitees there was difference of opinion and the final report was a multiplicity of small ones, each contradicting the other.

In 1923 there was yet another Committee of Inquiry, which was appointed because of the outcry in the scare Press that women were drawing the wrongly named "dole" who ought to go into domestic service. This was effectually disproved, and the committee made some good suggestions which, unfortunately, were not acted upon. One of these was that Local Committees of Employers and Employees should be set up, which would work out rates of pay and general standards for each locality—in fact, Whitley Councils for domestic workers. These would then act as a standard in the district, and the Employment Exchange, which was to take up the work of placing, would have some direction in offering employment.

In 1928, a committee was set up to deal with the social welfare of girls coming to London as domestic workers, the result of which has perhaps been to stimulate voluntary agencies to greater efforts to provide social life for these young people.

The difficulty of each of these committees has been that there was scarcely any member of them, or indeed anyone who gave evidence to them, who could speak with authority as the representative of any organised body of domestic workers; a similar difficulty existed in regard to the mistresses, though that perhaps has been less important.

Meanwhile the Central Committee for Women's Training and Employment has been doing practical work of the first importance in organising its training centres for unemployed women in other occupations willing to take up this job of domestic service. The courses extend over a period of three months, and training is given in cookery, laundry, housewifery and needlework. Whilst the course is not exhaustive it gives a good grounding and rouses an interest in domestic work which is not often found in a worker who goes straight to a job without training and often unwillingly. Girls who have passed through these courses find no difficulty in securing posts which are of a fairly good standard for beginners.

How to Solve the Difficulties

It appears to us from a consideration of all these reports and from our own knowledge of conditions that the following questions are the most important. We put them forward for discussion and especially we ask domestic servants to give us their views. In giving each we put the points we think count for most. But we want to have our omissions filled as well as to get comments on our own suggestions.

1. Organisation in Trade Unions.
2. Training.
3. Recruitment.
4. Unemployment Insurance.
5. Filling Vacancies in Domestic Employment.
6. Wages.
7. Hours and General Conditions of Work.
8. Recreation.

Organisation in Trade Unions

We have shown how necessary it is for servants to be organised, *i.e.*, to be brought into some firm association with one another, into some body which can speak with some authority for them, expressing their needs and wishes. They must also be associated with other workers to get the best out of organisation and, therefore, they must be part of the Trade Union Movement.

Should they be in a separate Trade Union or part of some large Trade Union with a separate department?

How can we combat the scattered nature of the trade? How reach the workers in one servant houses? How reach those of a servants' hall? How meet the difficulties of linking up those in rich and less rich houses?

Would it be easier to deal with organisation if we had local and national Whitley Councils for Domestic Servants? Could we begin these by establishing special committees in connection with Employment Exchanges?

Should Trade Unions for these workers be based on a club centre?

Training

The question of training and of entry into domestic service are closely interdependent. How far is training necessary after the domestic training in school and the home experience common to most girls? How far are bad conditions due to inexperienced girls, especially at the early age of 14 and 15, entering the trade? Should girls without further supervision be allowed to go into service far from their homes at ages under 16 or even 18?

The question of training has been regarded by some members of the committees we have mentioned as of very great importance. The experience of the Central Committee for Women's Training and Employment goes to show that this view is largely justified because of the success generally gained by women over 18 trained by them who have previously been in other trades. But it also goes to show that a training for girls of this age need not be a long one and a thirteen weeks non-residential course has given them a fair start. A longer training would, of course, be necessary for highly skilled cooking, though even here an intensive training of this period of selected workers who

showed talent (and a good cook must have talent) seems fairly effective. An experiment is now being made of a shorter residential course. How far would a general development of training help in improving conditions, and making the work more attractive?

Recruitment

Possibly of the many difficulties of the problem the one of recruitment is the most obvious. There is reputed to be a big unsatisfied demand for workers, and on the other hand there is undoubtedly a general disinclination among workers to enter domestic work. The profession is unpopular because it separates the servant from her own surroundings, often by a long journey, and takes her into new ones where she has an inferior social status. When at home the girl moves amongst equals and feels that she has a position of her own which gives her an independence she will not readily let go. Away in service she feels also a sense of helplessness and often a weight of ignorance; she feels that she cannot defend herself when things go wrong—that she is without help in a strange world. How far can these social conditions be altered? How far can the industry be organised to assure to the worker the independence and friendly support of her environment associated with the woman industrial worker?

Unemployment Insurance

There is another consideration which may also affect the problem. Does the fact that the domestic worker is not insured for unemployment give her an inferior status industrially and place her at an economic disadvantage? Undoubtedly the non-insurance of domestic workers has mitigated against an industrial worker taking domestic work temporarily, though the concession in the new Unemployment Insurance Act that a woman may return to industrial work within two years without having her claim to benefit prejudiced by having taken domestic work may do something to do away with this hardship. But does the ordinary domestic worker desire to be covered for the risk of unemployment? Would she be better off if she had her stamped card and so was sure of benefit during

unemployment? Domestic servants come under Health Insurance. Mistresses in many cases violently opposed their inclusion and a few servants adopted their view. It would be difficult to-day to find many (if any) such workers willing to forgo the protection given by this social service. Would it be the same with Unemployment Insurance?

Filling Vacancies in Domestic Employment

There are in general four ways of recruiting servants. 1. Registry Offices. 2. Charitable Institutions; Orphanages, Poor Law and similar institutions. 3. Newspaper Advertisements. 4. Employment Exchanges. The faults of the first method are pretty generally known. There are usually heavy fees to be paid by employers and even by workers. As they are run for private profit their interest is to get the applicant suited quickly—not always wisely—and another period of unemployment for the worker and inconvenience for the employer will probably give the agency another opportunity to make a profit.

The charitable institutions are said to place the girls in very unsuitable jobs, with poor wages. Though this generalisation is perhaps unfounded (and we would like information on this subject), there is undoubtedly a feeling that bad employers looking for cheap workers often favour agencies which deal with girls who have committed some offence and been committed to Borstal or some such institution or with orphans in institutions under charitable or Poor Law auspices.

Over newspaper advertisements and the conditions in the work advertised therein there can, of course, be no adequate control.

The fourth method is that which has the greatest possibilities. Were the Employment Exchanges to create machinery to deal with the registration of domestic workers, providing a room for interviews between employers and employees, coupled with the understanding that no jobs were to be offered which did not come up to a certain standard as regards wages and conditions, the other methods of recruitment would quickly decline in importance. Already the Exchanges have done much work—specially in placing girls from the training schemes already

mentioned—and they have done it as successfully as the unorganised conditions of domestic service made possible. We seek especially the views of domestic servants on this point.

Wages

How far can the domestic industry be said to be a sweated one? How do wages and conditions compare with other industry? As long ago as 1899 it was estimated that the average wages were roughly £16 a year (about 7s. a week), starting at about £7 a year or about 3s. a week, exclusive of allowances. It is difficult to get figures of present day wages, but girls who have had a short period of training are placed in London at an average of 10s. to 12s. 6d. per week, whilst in the provinces the prevailing rate seems to be about 10s. a week though a number are placed at 7s. 6d. and a similar number at 12s. to 12s. 6d. Highly skilled and experienced women get far higher rates, running from 15s. to 30s. for the best equipped.

Taking into account the provision of board and lodging, the beginners' rates may be compared with the following figures for women in industry :—

RATES OF PAY FOR WOMEN IN CERTAIN INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS *

Cable Making	28/6 to 32/6
Gold and Silver Trades	18/- to 30/-
French Polishers	37.7 to 58/9
Upholstresses	33/- to 45/6
Paper Making	27/- to 29/-
Boot and Shoe	34/-
Dressmaking	25/- to 30/-
Fur Trade	35/-
Hats and Millincry	28/-
Tailoring (ready-made)	28/-
Brush and Broom	26/-
Soap and Candles	30/-
Agriculture	20/- to 24/-

* The length of the working week varies in certain industries, but probably none of these rates are for more than a forty-eight hour week, except Agriculture, which may be fifty-two in summer. The rates quoted are those in operation at the close of 1929 or early 1930.

Hours and General Conditions of Work

Domestic service has all the difficulties of payment by "truck," since accommodation and food are provided as part wages. Should there be regulations as to accommodation and food? How could such regulations be standardised or enforced?

How far can hours be regulated in the individual household? How can the young be protected from tasks which are beyond their strength?

Might not all these questions be tackled by a local Whitley Council which would lay down the standard by which the Employment Exchanges should be guided in offering posts, leaving employers who did not conform to find their workers elsewhere? Servants would quickly know the terms they could expect and would profit by knowledge, and mistresses who gave less satisfactory conditions would have to go elsewhere and find great difficulty in securing servants. The question of housing and accommodation is very important. How far are resident servants housed to-day in basements or garrets totally unsuitable for health and comfort? How far could regulations be drawn up that would ensure suitability of lodgings?

Would not this in its turn be a great incentive to Trade Unionism? Representatives of servants would be required for the Whitley Council, and the establishment of the Whitley Councils would, in turn, stimulate the progress of Trade Unionism, since only through organisations of domestic servants would satisfactory representatives be found and sound decisions be reached.

Recreation

Servants are often a long way from home, are very lonely and need recreation which, of necessity, comes on a day different from that of their immediate associates in service. Very often they work in a residential district, away from their families and friends. There is thus a demand for special facilities for general recreation. Might not their Trade Union organisation cater for this need rather more fully than is usual in other trades, where the employees work in large groups, but live very often in widely scattered areas? Should not clubs and social organisation be part of their purpose?

Future Developments of Domestic Work

Whether the number of domestic workers in recent years has actually declined, remained stationary or increased, will not be known until the next census figures are available. There are tendencies at work, however, which modify the position of resident domestic service. Firstly, there is daily work, which is certainly on the increase, and, were it possible to decasualise such work, might be regulated and would be more like ordinary industrial occupations, with more independence and pleasanter social conditions. The question of wages and their standardisation for such employment needs, however, much consideration.

Secondly, there is the provision of service flats. This is increasing very fast, especially in London. Here the servant has not such a close connection with the individual she looks after as with the employer-landlord. Moreover, she works as one of a group, and can more easily be organised and conditions can be more readily enforced.

Thirdly, there is the demand now being more and more expressed, though little has yet been done to meet it, for more domestic help, for those who need it most—the mothers in working-class homes. The provision of home helps, who are trained workers, with an established status, in the service of the public authorities is now a recognised necessity of a good maternity service. May we not look forward in the future to the development of such a service, not only at times of a mother's special need but first in any period of illness and then its extension for the general daily help of overworked housewives? Should we not aim at a capable domestic service, always ready to give service by the hour or day, under well-regulated conditions, to all requiring it?

We ask the Conference to adopt the Report and to authorise us to send out as widely as possible a questionnaire based on all these matters with a special appeal and invitation to domestic workers to consider the subject and let us have their views. At the 1931 Conference we shall then be able to present for the consideration of delegates a Domestic Workers' Charter, based on the needs expressed by servants themselves, helped by the experience of women Trade Unionists and housewives. By these methods we may help in bringing happiness and welfare to a very large number of women working in a service essential to the well-being of the community.

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